

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9733

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

COMUSSAG NKP THAI

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 4499

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, MILI, CB

SUBJECT: LTG SAK SUTSAKHAN, NEW FANK CHIEF OF STAFF

1. (BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED).WE REPORTED SEPTEL PRESIDENT LON NOL'S DECLARATION TO THE NATION NAMING LTG SAK SUTSAKHAN TO REPLACE LTG SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ AS FANK CHIEF OF STAFF. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS DRAWN FROM BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON SAK SUTSAKHAN PUBLISHED BY THE GKR.

2. HE WAS BORN FEB. 8, 1928 IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE AND RECEIVED HIS MILITARY INSTRUCTION IN FRANCE. BETWEEN 1948 AND 1955 HE ATTENDED THE FOLLOWING FRENCH MILITARY SCHOOLS: THE ECOLE D'INSTRUCTION D'INFANTERIE AT COETQUIDAM; THE ECOLE D'INSTRUCTION DE GENIE AT ANGERS; THE ECOLE D'ETAT-MAJOR GENERAL; AND THE ECOLE SUPERIURE DE GUERRE.

3. BEFORE BECOMING UNDER SECREATARY OF STATE FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE IN 1956, HE HELD VARIOUS MILITARY STAFF JOBS, INCLUDING THAT OF ASSISTANT TO THE CHIEF OF STAFF. HE WAS NAMED MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND INFORMATION IN 1957 AND FROM 1958 TO 1962 WAS COMMANDER OF THE 2ND
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MILITARY REGION. HE SUBSEQUENTLY HELD AMONG OTHERS THE

POSTS OF SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND
LOCAL SELF DEFENSE AND ASSISTANT FOR OPERATIONS TO
THE CHIEF OF STAFF.

4. FROM 1970 TO 1972 HE WAS DEPUTY FANK CHIEF OF
STAFF, AFTER WHICH HE BECAME MINISTER OF STATE FOR
NATIONAL DEFENSE. HE WAS NAMED ROVING AMBASSADOR IN
1973 AND DIPLOMATIC COUNSELLOR WITH RANK OF MINISTER
IN 1974. HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE 1974 GKR DELEGATION
TO THE UNGA, AND HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH VARIOUS OTHER
DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS BOTH AS ROVING AMBASSADOR AND AS
SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE PRESIDENT.

5. HE IS MARRIED AND HAS FOUR CHILDREN.

6.(BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL). SAK SUTSAKHAN WAS THE LOGICAL
CHOICE TO REPLACE SOSTHENE, SINCE HE IS THE SENIOR
FANK LIEUTENANT-GENERAL WITH A MILITARY BACKGROUND.
(SIRIK MATAK AND SAUKAM KHOY, WHO ROUND OUT THE
TOTAL OF FOUR THREE-STAR GENERALS, OWE THEIR RANK TO
OTHER FACTORS). HIS COMBINATION OF DIPLOMATIC AND
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE, ABOVE AND BEYOND HIS PURELY
MILITARY TRAINING, SHOULD STAND HIM IN GOOD STEAD WHEN
HE TAKES OVER, AS WE EXPECT HIM TO DO SHORTLY WHEN
CABINET CHANGES ARE COMPLETED, THE ADDITIONAL POST OF
MINISTER OF DEFENSE.
DEAN

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